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interested is limited to the widest Spanish designation, that is, those Indians between the Ñuble and Imperial Rivers, and, more precisely, the area which today comprises the province of Arauco. This tiny province, some sixty miles long and twenty wide, was the focal point of Araucanian resistance.

The Spanish conquest of Araucanian Chile began in 1550 when Pedro de Valdivia and his followers built a fort and founded the town of Concepción on the northern bank of the Biobío River. From this point they moved south, inflicting military defeats on the Araucanians and dividing them in encomienda. Within three years the Spaniards had ranged below the Calle-Calle River, founding towns and reducing most of the Indians to servitude. The Indians were restive under this imposition of Spanish dominion, but offered no openly unified resistance. On the heels of this initial pacification Valdivia brought in experienced prospectors and miners from Santiago to search out the gold deposits that were believed to exist. The gold-seekers enjoyed incredible success: several strikes were made which yielded nuggets the size of almonds. "*Desde agora*," quoth Valdivia, "*comienzo a ser señor.*"[6]

But the Araucanians were not of like mind. Rapid development of the mines and discoveries of new ones portended undisguised slavery. Under such apprehension the Indians of Tucapel contrived a cunning trap for Valdivia into which he fell, and he was then killed and eaten.[6] This signal event inspired a general uprising which lasted for four years, ending with the death of the Indian leader Lautaro in the battle of Peteroa in 1557.[7] Although the general rebellion was ended at this time, the War of Arauco was begun. The Indians of Arauco, Tucapel, Catiray, and Purén (*the present province of Arauco and its peripheries*) stubbornly resisted effective Spanish settlement. This phase of the struggle lasted until 1598, when the Indians captured and ate Governor Martín García de Loyola.[8] There followed a spontaneous rebellion of subjugated Indians from the Maule River to Osorno in the south: every Spanish town worthy of the designation was wiped out below the Biobío, with the exception of Castro on the Isle

5 Alonso de Góngora Marmolejo, "Historia de Chile desde su descubrimiento hasta el año de 1575" (in *Colección de historiadores de Chile y documentos relativos a la historia nacional*, 49 vols., Santiago, 1861-1942), vol. 2, pp. 33-34 (this collection will hereafter be cited as CHC). Marmolejo came to Chile with Valdivia in 1549, hence his words with considerable experience and authority. His work is fundamental to the study of Araucanian culture.

6 *Idem*, pp. 37-39. Marmolejo's account of Valdivia's death is based on an eyewitness account, hence it is more acceptable than are the many others that are based on rumors and hearsay.

7 For a survey of the first general uprising see Encina, vol. 3, chaps. viii and ix.

8 *Idem*, vol. 2, chap. xviii; also see Gregorio Serrano, "Relación de la sublevación en Chile desde veinte de diciembre de noventa y ocho hasta primero de mayo de noventa y nueve" (CHC, vol. 43, pp. 227-233).

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of Chiloé.[9] Thus by 1600 the Spaniards, in spite of heavy expenditures of blood and treasure, faced a triumphant foe across the Biobío.

This impasse which marked the turn of the century suggests the central problem in understanding Araucanian culture. What faculty or genius did the Araucanians possess which enabled them to succeed so brilliantly where other indigenous American cultures had failed? How was it possible for the Araucanian warriors to boast rightfully, after some fifty years of warfare, that the Spaniards knew almost as much about the military art as they did?[10] Historians have been prone to avail themselves of superficially reasonable explanations: most cite the numerical superiority of the Indians; some blame the forest because it hampered the functions of the Spanish cavalry; others stress the overly long lines of supply from Peru, coupled with a chronic lack of viceregal interest. These factors are joined to a common belief that the Araucanians simply adopted the Spanish forms and techniques of war, making up in numbers what they lacked in skill. Chilean historians, especially since the nineteenth century when their homeland fought for independence from Spain, have quite happily viewed the historical record as a proof of Araucanian heroic mettle thence Chilean bravery and love of freedom. The point is that it is not merely a question of military science, topography, relative numerical strength, or racial declension. These may be significant particulars, but a war of survival between two ethnic groups implies a conflict of total cultures.

At once we are at a serious disadvantage because we have no such conception of early Araucanian culture, however well we may feel that we know the Spanish. By means of archaeological evidence and brief narratives of exploration we are able to piece together a rather crude notion of what Araucanian culture was like before the Spaniards came, but nothing more. Largely because the area under discussion became almost at once a zone of perpetual conflict, the work of the religious Orders did not develop as it did elsewhere in the Indies, and we keenly feel the lack of Mendicant chronicles. Consequently, most of our information concerning Araucanian life during the first century of conquest is derived from chronicles and histories of the war in which brief glimpses of Indian life all too infrequently appear. There are added limitations. Wherein the Indians were concerned, the chroniclers were seldom efficient observers. In matters of simple fact they tend to be trustworthy, but when the fact becomes interpretive they almost inevitably fail to grasp the human thought and action that lays behind it. Rather than as

9 Alonso González de Nájera, "Desengaño y reparo de la guerra de Chile" (CHC, vol. 14, pp. 10-15, 63-65, passim). The author was in Chile from 1601 to 1607. Experienced in military matters, he made a brave attempt to analyze Araucanian resistance. His work is invaluable for Araucanian study.

10 *Idem*, pp. 63-64.

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Spanish strength. Before its foundation the Spaniards posed a transient threat, but after it began to serve as a springboard for trans-Biobío conquest and settlement the Indians better understood the consequences involved. With alarming speed the Spanish moved southward, through the provinces of Arauco, Catiray, Tucapel, Purén, and Marigueño, coming to a temporary halt at the Calle-Calle River. This entire area, bordered on the west by the sea and on the east by the camino real (the easiest passage through the central valley), was divided in encomienda, Arauco, Tucapel, and Purén being retained by Valdivia as the basis of a princely estate.[11] These provinces, especially Arauco, were highly prized by the Spaniards as the most heavily populated of the whole kingdom, and as possessing an abundance of food stuffs, fine lands, and a most provident climate.[12]

Within this area the Indians lived in small, decentralized kinship groups, with no apparent inter-group relationship of an institutional nature. The sources of the sixteenth century are so meagre as to preclude the possibility of clear understanding of the socio-political divisions within the individual group. The local clusters of dwellings, in early chronicles called *levos*, in later ones *reguas*, composed a larger unit known as the *allaregua* (or *aillarewe*). Each allaregua was composed of nine or less levos. Olaverría, writing in 1594, describes this area as consisting of only five allareguas, but the context in which he mentions them suggests that this semi-centralization was of relatively recent origin.[13] There is no factual basis for postulating anything but a crude kinship relationship, markedly particularized by geographical isolation, at the time of the Spanish arrival.

These people, albeit ready warriors, were soundly defeated by Spanish arms and remained so for almost four years. Subsequent events, the revolt against Governor Valdivia in December, 1553, and the continuing War of Arauco, indicate quite clearly that this short peace was a period of Araucanian maturation. Through military action, service in encomienda, and free intercourse in the Spanish towns (Concepción, Imperial, Valdivia, and Villa Rica) they observed and learned much about Spanish military organization and strategy, government, social customs, mores, and religious concepts. The lessons they learned were adequately demonstrated in subsequent resistance against the invaders.

This initial period of communication with Spanish culture was constantly amplified throughout the following century. Military action was usually confined to the summer months. During harvest time and winter both Indians and Spaniards tended to refrain from active combat, holding what had been gained and preparing for summer campaigns. Through peaceful Indians, those serving the

11 Olaverría, p. 31.
12 Mercedario, p. 25; Padre de Valdivia to King, Sept. 25, 1551 (Gay, I, pp. 139-142).
13 Olaverría, p. 31.

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Spanish, the rebels kept themselves fully informed of all Spanish activity. Never lacking information, the Indians always had a precise idea of Spanish strength or weakness. There was seldom a rigid military perimeter; in those areas where the invader could maintain a fort and military supremacy the Indians were reduced to servitude. With a weakening of Spanish strength, rebellion inevitably occurred, so that the distinction as a peaceful or warlike Indian depended largely upon the state of affairs of the moment. Because the Indians so frequently changed roles, they were never out of personal contact with the Spanish.

The Indians received some aid and encouragement from Spanish deserters. There is no telling how many deserted to enemy ranks in the course of the sixteenth century, but in the year 1600 alone it is known that there were over sixty desertions.[14] A good many of these renegades were still living among the Indians in 1607.[15] In fear of peace and subsequent retribution, the traitors taught the Indians many things that would have been difficult for them to learn themselves, such as the proper use of firearms, building of forges and ironmongering, and even the techniques of political administration. The Spaniards were greatly perturbed when a mestizo powder-maker went over to the other side. With volcanic sulphur, saltpetre, and charcoal in abundance, the Indians could make deadly use of the large stores of field pieces and firearms which they had captured. As luck would have it, the deserter repented and returned to the Spanish fold, whereupon he was forgiven and permitted to return to Peru. There were also clerical renegades who apostatized and urged the Indians on in their own religious beliefs and practices.[16]

It is most important to understand that the motive for Araucanian observation of Spanish cultural forms was not to emulate them and thereby raise the level of their own, but to discover Spanish weaknesses and to mobilize Araucanian strength for forceful opposition. A fundamental weakness of Spanish occupation was its dire need of peace. Exploitation of this weakness became a cornerstone of Araucanian strategy throughout the sixteenth century and beyond. Spanish forces, both civilian and military, were too few and too widely dispersed, and the line of supply from Peru was much too long. Effective occupation and permanent settlement depended upon a guaranteed supply of Indian labor. This, of course, was in turn dependent upon total pacification, which would allow the colonists to concentrate on development of mining and agriculture rather than military defense. As experience in Mexico and Peru had shown, a mere handful of soldiers,

14 Encina, vol. 2, p. 306.

15 Nájera, p. 117.

16 *Idem*, pp. 117-122, 143-148, 69, 73-75. In spite of Spanish fears, firearms did not play a significant role in Indian strategy until late in the seventeenth century.

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of conquest ancient localism clashed with incipient nationalism. This conflict produced a political ambivalence which in itself contributed heavily to the cause of Araucanian independence. Centralization of politico-military authority was achieved to a point where successful resistance was possible, but did not develop to a stage where the Spaniards could defeat and usurp it.

The center of anti-Spanish unity was founded in what the Spanish termed *"el estado."* This was a geographical expression signifying the area that Valdivia held in personal encomienda.[29] It was these Indians, particularly those of Arauco, Tucapel, and Purén, who planned and carried out the revolt of 1553, and who assumed leadership of the resistance movement. After the first few years of bitter warfare the Spaniards began to imbue the term estado with political connotations, hence Don Alonso de Ercilla's image of *"el estado indómito"* was much more than a flight of poetic fancy.[30]

It is virtually certain that the Indians, in pre-Hispanic days, were in the habit of seeking transient familial and friendship alliances in the conduct of war between localities. Upon their first major defeat by Valdivia, following which he recrossed the Biobío and founded Concepción, the more intelligent Indian leaders voiced a wide call to arms.[31] The resulting alliance was effective in that it led to the downfall of Valdivia, but it had no permanent character. With each new Spanish thrust the caciques of the estado had to reform alliances and seek wider support for their efforts. In 1556, for example, Lautaro and the chiefs established relations with the Indians of Santiago, attempting to incite them to rebellion.[32] Temporary alliances were both frequent and effective. In search of allies the chiefs used glass beads, dogs, and various types of Spanish plunder to effect

29 Oliveria, p. 20. The area included the Indian localities of Talcamavida, Laucamilla, Catiray, Mariquanca, Angol, Arauco, Andalicán, Tucapel, and Purén. After the estado had been recognized as a political entity the term was applied to all or part of it. In essence, the term estado came to mean the center of Indian resistance, whether it embraced all of the above named provinces or merely one of them.

30 Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, ed., José Toribio Medina, *La Araucana* (3 vols., Santiago, 1910). Historians and anthropologists seem to be under a strange compulsion to use this poem as a prime documentary source. This is not to say that in select instances the practice is not warranted, but the wide use to which it has been put must certainly be held in question. Everyone knows that there is much truth in it, although seldom is it possible to determine precisely where it resides.

31 Marmolejo, pp. 22-23. It took nearly three years to organize the first rebellion. It is sometimes implied that the Araucanians were introduced to cooperative military effort on a large scale through attempted invasions by the Incas. This seems most unlikely because the Incas were held at the Maule River, and the Indians occupying this area, as nearly as can be ascertained, were the warlike Promaucaes, who were not Araucanians. Nor could the Inca invasions have had anything to do with the formation of the estado, since, as we have seen, it was created by the imposition of Spanish dominion, without which it could have had no meaning.

32 *Idem*, pp. 61-62.